

HOUSE JOURNAL

EIGHTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION

PROCEEDINGS

FIRST DAY — TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

In accordance with the laws and Constitution of the State of Texas, the members-elect of the house of representatives assembled this day in the hall of the house of representatives in the city of Austin. At 12:03 p.m., the Honorable Jane Nelson, 115th secretary of state of the State of Texas, called the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas to order.

Secretary Nelson recognized Gregory S. Davidson, pastor, CrossPointe Presbyterian Church, Austin, who offered the invocation as follows:

Dear God, our mighty creator and sustainer, the one in whom we live, move, and have our being. I stand here this afternoon to invoke your name, to ask for your presence, and to seek your guidance for the 89th Session of the Texas Legislature. You are the great lawgiver, the one from whom all laws and statutes flow. Without you, we are set adrift on a lawless sea of despair. For we know that, when left to our own devices, we fall into chaos. Forgive us when we do. But you desire better for us. You allowed the founders of this great republic to create a government, an association based on representative democracy, with this branch being closest to the people it serves.

These women and men standing here will swear an oath to be those representatives, but in reality, they are the vicars and viceroys of your government, those whom you have empowered to hear the cries of the people, and to act on their behalf to maintain order, promote justice, and punish evil. While it is you who has placed them here, each of them has answered your call with great cost and personal sacrifice. And not only them, Lord, but their families as well.

I ask your blessing on their spouses, children, and family members, that you will strengthen them while their mothers or fathers are away, that you will keep them safe and protect them until these citizen legislators can return to their homes after the session is over.

Lord, I ask your blessing on the legislative staff who will help these representatives carry out their sacred duties, that you will give them staff who will provide wise counsel, sound advice, and help them to promote character, honesty, and integrity.

I ask your blessing on the staff of this chamber, and on the affiliated legislative support agencies, that you will protect them during the long hours ahead, that you will lift them when they get weary, and that you will remind them of the important work they do to support the founders' vision of a sound and fair government.

Finally, Lord, I seek your blessing on these legislators themselves. May you give them the patience of Job. The vision of Abraham. The statesmanship of Sam Houston. The courage of Juan Seguin. The eloquence of Barbara Jordan. And the selfless service to the cause of Texas of Clara Driscoll.

Jesus, you told us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). And so they are. Today, Lord, may we all be peacemakers, so we may be your children. For it is in your most holy and perfect name I pray. Amen.

Secretary Nelson recognized Alexandra Dorantes from the Butler School of Music at The University of Texas at Austin, who sang the national anthem.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Tom Craddick of Midland County who led the house in the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag and the Honorable Senfronia Thompson of Harris County who led the house in the pledge of allegiance to the Texas flag.

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Honorable Jane Nelson, secretary of state of the State of Texas, addressed the house, speaking as follows:

I am Jane Nelson, Texas secretary of state. It is my privilege to join you on this very important day as we open a new legislative session dedicated to serving the people of Texas.

For the new members who may not know me, before serving as secretary, I had the privilege of serving Texas in the senate for 30 years. I remember vividly the excitement of my very first opening day being sworn in. I had my five children with me right there on the senate floor and the excitement of celebrating with friends and family. I want to tell you brand-new members: Congratulations and welcome. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

And returning members, welcome back, and thank you for continuing to serve the people of Texas.

Many of you have family here with you, and I want to welcome all of the family members and friends who support these legislators. We understand the sacrifices you make when your loved ones answer the call to public service. So whether you're here today or cheering from home—I know there are cameras up there somewhere, looking out—just thank you for supporting these members. Thank you. Truly.

I wish everybody here could be where I am, looking at you. Seeing what I see—a chamber that's filled with individuals and families that reflect our great state, filled with hope and filled with excitement.

And do not forget to look around—I mean, just look at where we are. Did you look, walking in, at the magnificence of this building? Think of the history that has taken place here. Sometimes—Walter Fisher's been around longer than I have. Tom Craddick, I think you have too. Senfronia—I mean some of us have been around for quite a while. And new members, learn from those that have been around for a while. But sometimes when I was over there in the senate working long hours—members, you're going to work long hours. Sometimes

when I'd been here long hours and late at night, I would go up to the senate chamber when nobody else was there, and I would sit in the senate chamber and just think about those that served before me. I was inspired by the honor and the dignity and the pride of being a Texan. Did those members disagree with each other? Of course they did.

See that man sitting over there? Mike, put up your hand. Okay, that's my husband right there, and I've been married to him for 50 years. And a sidenote, it took him five years to ask me to marry him, but that's an aside. But we certainly don't always agree. And we are just two people. Now this body here is made up of 150 members representing districts that are very diverse—urban, rural, suburban, rich, poor. Of course there are going to be differences. But there are core issues that are important to all of us that are quite similar. We all want our families to be healthy and safe. We all want our children to receive a good education. We all want an economic climate in which businesses can grow and prosper.

Today marks the beginning of 140 days of work on behalf of the people of Texas. There will be challenges, and there will be debates. But remember: We are family. We are all Texans. We care about each other. We take care of each other. And together we will continue to be the best state in which to live, work, and raise a family.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Secretary Nelson announced the appointment of temporary officers and employees for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Parliamentarians | Walter Fisher and Sharon Carter |
| Assistant Parliamentarian | Thomas G. Samuels |
| Chief Clerk | Stephen Brown |
| Assistant Chief Clerk | Mark Cervantes |
| Journal Clerk | Jennifer Teigen Doran |
| Voting Clerk | Scottie Hagen |
| Sergeant-at-Arms | Kara Coffee |
| Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms | Brianah Wallace |
| Doorkeeper | Alec DeGilio |
| Reading Clerks | Mason Roberts and Alyssa Vargas |
| Committee Coordinator | Stacey Nicchio |
| Assistant Committee Coordinator | Damian Duarte |
| Executive Director, House Business Office | Steven D. Adrian |
| Assistant Director, House Business Office | Scott D. Siebert |
| Chaplain | Gregory S. Davidson |

ROLL OF MEMBERS-ELECT SHOWING DISTRICTS REPRESENTED

Secretary Nelson directed the chief clerk to call the roll of members-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas, according to representative districts.

The roll was called as follows:

| <u>DISTRICT</u> | <u>NAME</u> | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| District 1 | Gary VanDeaver | |
| District 2 | Brent A. Money | |
| District 3 | Cecil Bell Jr. | (hereinafter "C. Bell") |
| District 4 | Keith Bell | (hereinafter "K. Bell") |
| District 5 | Cole Hefner | |
| District 6 | Daniel Alders | |
| District 7 | Jay Dean | |
| District 8 | Cody Harris | |
| District 9 | Trent Ashby | |
| District 10 | Brian Harrison | |
| District 11 | Joanne Shofner | |
| District 12 | Trey Wharton | |
| District 13 | Angelia Orr | |
| District 14 | Paul Dyson | |
| District 15 | Steve Toth | |
| District 16 | Will Metcalf | |
| District 17 | Stan Gerdes | |
| District 18 | Janis Holt | |
| District 19 | Ellen Troxclair | |
| District 20 | Terry M. Wilson | |
| District 21 | Dade Phelan | |
| District 22 | Christian Manuel | |
| District 23 | Terri Leo Wilson | |
| District 24 | Greg Bonnen | |
| District 25 | Cody Thane Vasut | |
| District 26 | Matt Morgan | |
| District 27 | Ronald Reynolds | |
| District 28 | Gary Gates | |
| District 29 | Jeffrey Barry | |
| District 30 | AJ Louderback | |
| District 31 | Ryan Guillen | |
| District 32 | Todd Hunter | |
| District 33 | Katrina Pierson | |
| District 34 | Denise Villalobos | |
| District 35 | Oscar Longoria | |
| District 36 | Sergio Muñoz Jr. | |
| District 37 | Janie Lopez | (hereinafter "J. Lopez") |
| District 38 | Erin Elizabeth Gámez | |
| District 39 | Armando "Mando" Martinez | |
| District 40 | Terry Canales | |
| District 41 | Bobby Guerra | |
| District 42 | Richard Peña Raymond | |
| District 43 | J.M. Lozano | |
| District 44 | Alan Schoolcraft | |

| | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| District 45 | Erin Zwiener | |
| District 46 | Sheryl Cole | |
| District 47 | Vikki Goodwin | |
| District 48 | Donna Howard | |
| District 49 | Gina Hinojosa | |
| District 50 | James Talarico | |
| District 51 | Maria Luisa "Lulu" Flores | |
| District 52 | Caroline Harris Davila | |
| District 53 | Wes Virdell | |
| District 54 | Brad Buckley | |
| District 55 | Hillary Hickland | |
| District 56 | Pat Curry | |
| District 57 | Richard Hayes | |
| District 58 | Helen Kerwin | |
| District 59 | Shelby Slawson | |
| District 60 | Mike Olcott | |
| District 61 | Keresa Richardson | |
| District 62 | Shelley Luther | |
| District 63 | Ben Bumgarner | |
| District 64 | Andy Hopper | |
| District 65 | Mitch Little | |
| District 66 | Matt Shaheen | |
| District 67 | Jeff Leach | |
| District 68 | David Spiller | |
| District 69 | James B. Frank | |
| District 70 | Mihaela Elizabeth Plesa | |
| District 71 | Stan Lambert | |
| District 72 | Drew Darby | |
| District 73 | Carrie Isaac | |
| District 74 | Eddie Morales Jr. | (hereinafter "E. Morales") |
| District 75 | Mary E. González | (hereinafter "M. González") |
| District 76 | Suleman Lalani | |
| District 77 | Vincent "Vince" Perez | (hereinafter "V. Perez") |
| District 78 | Joe Moody | |
| District 79 | Claudia Ordaz | |
| District 80 | Don McLaughlin Jr. | |
| District 81 | Brooks Landgraf | |
| District 82 | Tom Craddick | |
| District 83 | Dustin Burrows | |
| District 84 | Carl H. Tepper | |
| District 85 | Stan Kitzman | |
| District 86 | John Smithee | |
| District 87 | Caroline Fairly | |
| District 88 | Ken King | |
| District 89 | Candy Noble | |
| District 90 | Ramon Romero Jr. | |

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| District 91 | David Lowe | |
| District 92 | Salman Bhojani | |
| District 93 | Nate Schatzline | |
| District 94 | Tony Tinderholt | |
| District 95 | Nicole Collier | |
| District 96 | David Cook | |
| District 97 | John McQueeney | |
| District 98 | Giovanni Capriglione | |
| District 99 | Charlie Geren | |
| District 100 | Venton Jones | <i>(hereinafter "V. Jones")</i> |
| District 101 | Chris Turner | |
| District 102 | Ana-Maria Ramos | <i>(hereinafter "Rodríguez Ramos")</i> |
| District 103 | Rafael Anchía | |
| District 104 | Jessica González | <i>(hereinafter "J. González")</i> |
| District 105 | Terry Meza | |
| District 106 | Jared Patterson | |
| District 107 | Linda Garcia | <i>(hereinafter "L. Garcia")</i> |
| District 108 | Morgan Meyer | |
| District 109 | Aicha Davis | <i>(hereinafter "A. Davis")</i> |
| District 110 | Toni Rose | |
| District 111 | Yvonne Davis | <i>(hereinafter "Y. Davis")</i> |
| District 112 | Angie Chen Button | |
| District 113 | Rhetta Andrews Bowers | |
| District 114 | John Bryant | |
| District 115 | Cassandra Hernandez | <i>(hereinafter "Garcia Hernandez")</i> |
| District 116 | Trey Martinez Fischer | |
| District 117 | Philip Cortez | |
| District 118 | John Lujan III | |
| District 119 | Elizabeth "Liz" Campos | |
| District 120 | Barbara Gervin-Hawkins | |
| District 121 | Marc LaHood | |
| District 122 | Mark Dorazio | |
| District 123 | Diego Bernal | |
| District 124 | Josey Garcia | <i>(hereinafter "J. Garcia")</i> |
| District 125 | Ray Lopez | <i>(hereinafter "R. Lopez")</i> |
| District 126 | E. Sam Harless | |
| District 127 | Charles Cunningham | |
| District 128 | Briscoe Cain | |
| District 129 | Dennis Paul | |
| District 130 | Tom Oliverson | |
| District 131 | Alma A. Allen | |
| District 132 | Mike Schofield | |
| District 133 | Mano DeAyala | |
| District 134 | Ann Johnson | |
| District 135 | Jon E. Rosenthal | |
| District 136 | John H. Bucy III | |

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|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| District 137 | Gene Wu | |
| District 138 | Lacey Hull | |
| District 139 | Charlene Ward Johnson | |
| District 140 | Armando Lucio Walle | |
| District 141 | Senfronia Thompson | |
| District 142 | Harold V. Dutton Jr. | |
| District 143 | Ana Hernandez | |
| District 144 | Mary Ann Perez | <i>(hereinafter "M. Perez")</i> |
| District 145 | Christina Morales | <i>(hereinafter "C. Morales")</i> |
| District 146 | Lauren Ashley Simmons | |
| District 147 | Jolanda Jones | <i>(hereinafter "J. Jones")</i> |
| District 148 | Penny Morales Shaw | |
| District 149 | Hubert Vo | (absent) |
| District 150 | Valoree Swanson | |

A quorum was announced present.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

Secretary Nelson directed the chief clerk to administer the constitutional oath of office to the members-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas, all of those present rising together and repeating the following oath, prescribed by the Constitution, as it was read to them, as follows:

"I, _____, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of member of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state, so help me God."

HOUSE AT EASE

At 12:32 p.m., Secretary Nelson announced that the house would stand at ease pending the departure of guests.

Secretary Nelson called the house to order at 12:53 p.m.

OATH OF OFFICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Secretary Nelson announced the constitutional oath of office was administered to the Honorable Hubert Vo, District 149, member-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature.

(Vo now present)

MOTION IN WRITING TEMPORARY RULES

The Honorable Angie Chen Button of Dallas County offered the following motion in writing:

Madam Secretary:

I move to adopt the House Rules of Procedure from the 88th Legislature, excepting Rule 16, as temporary rules.

Button

The motion in writing was read and prevailed.

HR 1 - ADOPTED
(by Hunter and Vasut)

The following resolution was laid before the house:

HR 1

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, that, in accordance with Sections 9(b) and 11, Article III, Texas Constitution, the House of Representatives of the 89th Legislature shall elect a speaker of the house from its own membership as follows:

SECTION 1. NOMINATIONS. (a) The secretary of state shall call for nominations from the floor for the election of speaker of the house of representatives and shall recognize every member who desires to make a nomination. The order in which members shall proceed to make a nomination shall be determined by lot.

(b) Each member recognized for this purpose shall immediately advance to the front microphone and make the nomination in a nominating speech not to exceed five minutes in length.

(c) After all nominations have been made, the secretary of state shall declare nominations to be closed.

(d) The secretary of state shall recognize at any time a member whose name has been placed in nomination for the purpose of withdrawing as a nominee. A member who withdraws is not considered a nominee.

SECTION 2. SECONDS. (a) A person is not considered a nominee unless the nomination is seconded by at least one member.

(b) One seconding speech shall be allowed for each nomination in the order in which nominations were made, then other seconding speeches shall be allowed in rotation in the same order.

(c) No more than three seconding speeches shall be allowed for each nominee.

(d) A seconding speech may not exceed four minutes in length.

SECTION 3. VOTING PROCEDURES: VOTING MACHINE. (a) If after the close of all seconding speeches only one nominee remains for election to the speaker, the secretary of state shall recognize a motion to elect that nominee by acclamation. If no motion is made or five or more members make a written request for a record vote, the members shall record their votes from their desks on the voting machine with the yeas and nays taken as in other record votes of the house.

(b) If there are two or three nominees for speaker, the members shall record their votes from their desks on the voting machine with a different colored light on the machine indicating a vote for each nominee. The presiding officer shall draw lots to determine the color for each nominee.

(c) Before the close of voting on the voting machine, the presiding officer shall provide several warnings to the members that the voting period is about to close.

(d) A verification of a vote taken by voting machine shall be by roll call vote, with the members seated and the house at order, beginning with the members recorded as voting for the nominee with the most votes. During verification, a member may not change a vote unless it was erroneously recorded, and any member not having voted for a nominee may not cast a vote.

(e) If there are three nominees for speaker, a member who does not cast a vote for a nominee but who was recorded as present at the initial roll call taken under Section 301.004, Government Code, shall be recorded as "present, not voting" in the record of the vote.

SECTION 4. VOTING PROCEDURES: ROLL CALL VOTE. (a) If there are more than three nominees for speaker, the election shall be held in the manner provided for a roll call vote of the members with the chief clerk calling the members' names in alphabetical order. When the chief clerk reads aloud the name of a member, the member shall vote by stating the name of one of the nominees or state that the member is present, not voting. The chief clerk shall repeat the member's vote aloud and record the vote on a tally sheet.

(b) After all members have announced their votes, the chief clerk shall prepare a report containing the total votes received by each nominee and the total number of members who are present, not voting. The chief clerk shall provide a copy of the report to the secretary of state.

(c) A verification of a vote taken by roll call consists solely of ensuring that an announced vote was tallied correctly.

SECTION 5. RECORD VOTE. All votes taken shall be record votes with the vote of each member entered in the House Journal.

SECTION 6. RESULTS; RUNOFF. (a) The secretary of state shall announce the results of the election. If a nominee receives 76 or more of the votes cast, the secretary of state shall declare that nominee to be elected to the office of speaker of the house of representatives.

(b) If no nominee receives 76 or more of the votes cast, the two nominees receiving the largest number of votes in the initial vote shall be in a runoff conducted by voting machine as provided by Section 3 of this resolution. The secretary of state shall announce the results of the runoff and declare the nominee receiving 76 or more of the votes cast to be elected.

(c) If in a runoff between two nominees no nominee receives 76 or more of the votes cast, additional rounds of runoff voting shall occur between the same two nominees until one of the nominees in the runoff receives 76 or more of the votes cast.

SECTION 7. TIE VOTES. If in the initial vote no nominee receives 76 or more of the votes cast and it is not possible to determine the two nominees receiving the largest number of votes cast because of a tie vote, additional rounds of voting shall occur among the same nominees, other than a nominee who

withdraws, until a nominee receives 76 or more of the votes cast, or if no nominee receives 76 or more of the votes cast, until it is possible to determine the two nominees who receive the largest number of votes cast.

SECTION 8. OATH. After the election, the secretary of state shall:

(1) direct the speaker-elect to proceed to the speaker's rostrum for the purpose of taking the constitutional oath of office; and

(2) proceed to the administration of the oath of office to the speaker-elect. The speaker shall take the chair immediately after taking the oath of office.

HR 1 was adopted by (Record 1): 145 Yeas, 5 Nays, 0 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Alders; Allen; Anchía; Ashby; Barry; Bell, C.; Bell, K.; Bernal; Bhojani; Bonnen; Bowers; Bryant; Buckley; Bucy; Bumgarner; Burrows; Button; Cain; Campos; Canales; Capriglione; Cole; Collier; Cook; Cortez; Craddick; Cunningham; Curry; Darby; Davis, A.; Dean; DeAyala; Dorazio; Dutton; Dyson; Fairly; Flores; Frank; Gámez; Garcia, J.; Garcia, L.; Garcia Hernandez; Gates; Gerdes; Geren; González, J.; González, M.; Goodwin; Guerra; Guillen; Harless; Harris; Harris Davila; Harrison; Hayes; Hefner; Hernandez; Hickland; Hinojosa; Holt; Hopper; Howard; Hull; Hunter; Isaac; Johnson; Jones, V.; Kerwin; King; Kitzman; LaHood; Lalani; Lambert; Landgraf; Leach; Leo Wilson; Little; Longoria; Lopez, J.; Lopez, R.; Louderback; Lowe; Lozano; Lujan; Luther; Manuel; Martinez; Martinez Fischer; McLaughlin; McQueeney; Metcalf; Meyer; Meza; Money; Moody; Morales, C.; Morales, E.; Morales Shaw; Morgan; Muñoz; Noble; Olcott; Oliverson; Ordaz; Orr; Patterson; Paul; Perez, M.; Perez, V.; Phelan; Pierson; Plesa; Raymond; Reynolds; Richardson; Romero; Rose; Rosenthal; Schatzline; Schofield; Schoolcraft; Shaheen; Shofner; Simmons; Slawson; Smithee; Spiller; Swanson; Talarico; Tepper; Tinderholt; Toth; Troxclair; Turner; VanDeaver; Vasut; Villalobos; Virdell; Vo; Walle; Ward Johnson; Wharton; Wilson; Wu; Zwiener.

Nays — Davis, Y.; Gervin-Hawkins; Jones, J.; Rodríguez Ramos; Thompson.

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Secretary Nelson announced that the next order of business would be the election of the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas and stated nominations for speaker would now be in order. Pursuant to the provisions of the previous resolution, Secretary Nelson drew lots to determine the order in which members would proceed to make a nomination.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Christina Morales of Harris County, who placed in nomination for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable Ana-Maria Rodríguez Ramos of Dallas County, speaking as follows:

Esteemed members, both new and old—or returning—welcome to the Texas House of Representatives. Today is a historical day as we begin the 89th Legislative Session.

My nomination today is about the millions of Texans who can't see a doctor because health insurance is out of reach. It is about the Texas children dying in the very classrooms where they should be safe from harm. It is about the millions of Texans who can't make ends meet despite showing up and working hard every single day. These challenges demand leadership that understands them at a personal level and has the courage to fight for solutions. It is imperative that we elect a speaker who knows working Texans' struggle firsthand and puts the needs of our most vulnerable above the elite.

The reality is that Texans are dying. Texas children, like my constituents Landon Payton or Sergio Rodriguez, should have been safe in their schools in my district—in Texas District 145—but instead had their young lives cut short. Landon, when school-issued medical equipment failed. And Sergio, when he had no option but to cross lethal train tracks to get to school. Sergio and Landon are stories that happen every day in all of our districts. Children are becoming statistics, and we have the opportunity to act and put an end to these preventable deaths. We have failed them in this house, and we must ensure that no more parents have to bury their children.

Many of you know that I was an orphan by the time I was a teenager. And it was my family members, like my siblings, my cousins—who are here today—my grandparents, that took care of me after my parents were gone. Outside of these walls, families, neighbors, and communities put aside their disagreements to protect each other. But members of this body don't look like the rest of Texas. We, as members, vote on policy that impacts every Texan, but we rarely know what it's like to choose between paying a light bill and buying groceries. It's time we elect a speaker who does.

Representative Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos grew up in East Dallas, is the daughter of Mexican immigrants, and was raised by a single mom. She is the middle child of seven siblings, who frequently tussled with her brothers and sisters for scarce resources, surviving in the hot Texas heat and blistering winters in any way that they could. Much like in my family, Ana-María's older sisters stepped in to care for the younger ones. In the summers when school was out, they were sent to Mexico because feeding seven kids in Texas just wasn't affordable. While attending schools, she had to be dropped off so early that the teachers had yet to arrive and the lights were still off in the school. But education was still a priority. Her mother always had books in the house, and Ana-María escaped into everything from encyclopedias to fairy tales. Her mother worked hard to show her children that there was something more out there to strive for: the American dream.

Ana-María never felt that dream was for her. After middle school, her life was interrupted by the birth of her daughter, and she didn't make it to high school. At 15, a pregnancy was a challenge. But in her room in a Parkland hospital looking at her daughter, she knew she had to do something more.

Madam Secretary and members, it is my privilege to nominate Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos for speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Trent Ashby of Angelina County, who placed in nomination for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable David Cook of Tarrant County, speaking as follows:

Members, it is my honor to stand before you today to nominate a principal public servant, trusted colleague, and a man of unwavering character to lead this body as the next speaker of the Texas House of Representatives—my dear friend, David Cook.

I've served under three speakers, having approved them by both acclimation and through a contested process much like we see today, as well as run for speaker myself. With that experience, let me be the first to offer my thanks and deep respect for those members who have the courage to pursue this role and solicit support of you, our colleagues. Despite what some may say, doing so takes dedication to a greater cause than oneself. I want to express my profound appreciation for their involvement in this process.

As I start my seventh term in office, I have come to appreciate the value of maintaining friendships despite differences. Thomas Jefferson spoke to this when he said, "I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as a cause for withdrawing from a true friend." Wise words worth reflecting upon as we move forward today.

Members, the decision we are faced with at this moment is one of the most personal votes we will take this session. Like many of you, I have dear friends on every side of this issue. And despite what you might read in the paper or in social media, your vote today is yours alone—and it is perfectly okay to disagree. I assure you, this will not be the last time that you find yourself on the opposite side as some of your closest colleagues.

However, it is in these moments of disagreement and division that I believe David Cook's approach to leadership truly shines. His approach is built on a foundation of service framed by his experience at the local level, where he spent 13 years as mayor of Mansfield. As mayor, David earned the respect and the admiration of the entire community through his inclusive leadership, working alongside citizens, local businesses, and community leaders to preserve local control and advance commonsense policies that foster economic growth, maintain fiscal responsibility, and, importantly members, ensure that every voice is heard. That same belief in the power of collaboration that David forged in local government continues to guide him in the Capitol today.

Throughout his bid to be our next speaker, David has consistently shown that he values all perspectives, regardless of party affiliation or professional background. He understands that the strength of this chamber lies in our diversity and that the very best way to serve the people is by ensuring that every representative has a seat at the table and a voice in the process. Over the last few months, I have seen firsthand that David believes true leadership is not about concentrating power in a single individual but about empowering others. He has consistently sought input from colleagues, proposed bold solutions to complex

issues, and worked tirelessly to build trust and respect, bringing out the best in all around him. David has been vocal that his vision of the speaker's office is one that strikes a balance between preserving the institutional practices that make our body so special while establishing clear, consistent rules in members—applying them equally to promote trust and provide the leveled playing field that is essential for effective governance.

Under David's leadership, the speaker's office will be accessible to all of us and will serve as a hub for teamwork, where every representative can exchange ideas and advocate for our constituencies. David values cooperation over conflict, service over self-interest, and the priorities of Texans over the pressures of outside forces. He has made it clear that, as speaker, he will not only defend this chamber's long-standing tradition of collaboration, but work to strengthen it. Members, we face a critical choice at this hour—continue down this same path, or chart a new one to make this house great.

Today, I ask you to join me in supporting a leader who will govern with integrity, respect every voice among us, and lead us into a new era as a united house. Members, I believe that man is David Cook, and I humbly ask for your vote to make him the next speaker of the Texas House.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Charlie Geren of Tarrant County, who placed in nomination for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable Dustin Burrows of Lubbock County, speaking as follows:

Thank you, Madam Secretary and my former senator, and let me tell you something: You can't have a better senator than I had right there. That's true.

When I stepped on the floor of the house a long time ago—2001—I pledged to uphold the Constitution of the United States and of the great State of Texas. I hope to pass the lessons that I've learned on from years of service, shaped by both wins and some bitter losses. I've carried some bad bills, and I've carried some good ones, and I hope the good ones are the ones I'm remembered for.

I understand the urge to ignore the democrats and push our republican agenda through without any dissent. Republicans have fought hard to win the last election, and we still control both the governor and lieutenant governor—their offices. But the partisan campaigns were over November 5. We're here to work for and with each other, for and with our constituents. Our constituents are not just republicans, are not just democrats, are not just independents. They're rich people, they're poor people, they're school children in both public and private. We owe it to them to do our best to take care of their needs, not ours. And if any of you ran for office and are going to vote just so you can get reelected or get elected to a higher office, you ran for the wrong reason. This is the Texas House; we are beholden to each other.

We need to elect a speaker who will uphold our traditions and despite what you heard from paid influence—paid by billionaires that want to control this room—they're not going to. By working together, both republicans and democrats, we have passed major tax relief—very conservative, but major tax relief. We have provided more money to help secure our border. And we have worked together to get to these places.

Once again, back to these people that are trying to buy the house. There are some really important things to defend here. I've seen Speaker Craddick and Dean Thompson work together on mental illness and hospital issues. They can work together to get things done. He's a really good republican and she's a really good democrat. They're friends, and they can work together the same way that Ms. Thompson has worked with Senator Huffman on some very important issues related to human trafficking. Thank you, Ms. T, for that. This is our Texas. We are all different people, but we share a goal that all Texans deserve an opportunity for success, education, and safety. They're not values that are limited by either party. We all share the commitment we made when we hit this floor and we took an oath to God to support the Constitution and laws of this great state.

Dustin Burrows—I've known Dustin since he got here. Dustin came in, and he was a little rough, and he made some people mad. I was one of them. But I've watched him, over his time in the legislature, become a great leader. You can't have a job like Dustin has had running Calendars without making somebody mad. It's impossible. Isn't it, Speaker Craddick? I'm down to one minute, so I'm going to finish this up pretty quickly. Dustin Burrows is the right man for this. He's a good man, a very principled attorney. He will serve all of you. His door, like a lot of ours, will be open all the time, and he welcomes each and every one of you to come to his office and express your ideas.

We will elect Dustin as speaker today, and I look forward to serving with him and all of you.

Secretary Nelson stated that nominations were closed and recognized the Honorable John Bryant of Dallas County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos, speaking as follows:

It is my great honor and privilege to second the nomination of a person superbly qualified by character, determination, and ability to serve as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, Representative Ana-Maria Rodríguez Ramos of Dallas County. For three terms, she has consistently demonstrated courage, fierce determination to advance the interests of working and retired families, and an unyielding defense of people in our state who are otherwise defenseless against the power of billionaires, big business, and religious zealots.

Of the three candidates, Ana-Maria Rodríguez Ramos is the only candidate for speaker who has consistently voted for full funding of public education in a state that is 44th in state support for public schools. She is the only candidate who opposes using our meager public education funds for private school vouchers, and she is the only candidate who supports a woman's right to choose as well as revisions of the law in order to permit women in a pregnancy crisis to receive the urgent medical care that will save their lives. Ana-Maria Ramos is the only candidate who supports the LGBTQ community and their right to live fully and safely—in a house where 30 bills have been filed so far that put that safety at risk. Now, the other candidates were invited to tell us what they would do to protect that community. Their supporters were asked to bring forward their proposals for protecting that community, and none came forward. She is the only candidate who is committed to protecting the Hispanic population in Texas. Our largest group in the face of bills that would allow them to be racially profiled in

their own communities. The other candidates were invited to bring forward their proposals to do the very same thing, and their supporters were invited to do the same thing, and none were forthcoming.

Members of the house, in a state in which the wealth gap is so extreme that 66 billionaires living in our state own more wealth than 70 percent of Texans combined. What should we be looking for in a candidate to lead this house? I submit to you we should be looking for a person who not only has demonstrated the character and ability to lead but a person who has a deep understanding of everyday Texans' most intimate family and household struggles. That person is Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos. I commend her to you and ask you to vote for her for speaker of the house, and it is my honor to second her nomination.

The nomination of the Honorable David Cook was seconded by the Honorable Ellen Troxclair of Travis County, speaking as follows:

It is such an honor to stand before you today and to serve alongside each and every one of you. I know I came here for a reason, and I know that you all came here for a reason too. We came here because we want to make a difference. We want to deliver for our districts. We want to make Texas an even better place to live. We want to serve with integrity, and we want to follow through on the issues that led us to seek this public service in the first place.

But in all of the complexities and the challenges that we face, it can be easy to lose sight of what matters most. When we're in this building—around these big personalities, the grandeur of this building, and this responsibility—it's easy to fall into thinking that this job is about the politics, that this job is about the power. But when we take a step back and remember why we came here, you know just as well as I do, that it is not about us. It is about them—the people we came here to represent.

In that spirit, we need a leader who remembers that too. A leader who is focused on delivering real, meaningful results for all Texans. A leader who isn't out for personal gain but is firmly committed to lifting others up.

Over this past session, I've had the privilege of seeing David Cook in action. What I've witnessed is a leader who gives without expecting anything in return. When I found myself in a difficult position with one of my bills last session and unsure of how to proceed, David proactively offered to help. Not because he needed something from me, not because he expected something in return, but because he genuinely wanted to make sure his colleague—someone he did not know before last session—was successful. His service was not transactional. It was about making things better for the people that he serves alongside every day, and I know that each of you has experienced that same respect from him consistently, day in and day out.

Whether you are a freshman or a veteran, whether you are a democrat or a republican, he listens. He responds thoughtfully. He creates space for others to have their voices heard. And, importantly, he works tirelessly to find common ground and give each of us the opportunity to achieve what we came here to do—to deliver for the people of Texas. This is the kind of leadership we need in the speaker's chair—someone who isn't focused on their own agenda but who understands that true leadership is about facilitating the success of others.

Someone who seeks opportunities to do just that, whether it's accomplishing something for our districts or helping us navigate the challenges we know that we will face in the heat of session. David Cook embodies the spirit of service. He is the kind of leader who leads not by commanding but by motivating and empowering; not putting others down but lifting others up. You heard that time and time again from him and from Representative Ashby. He is the kind of speaker who will unite this body, who can make sure that every member can succeed, and ultimately, who will deliver for the people of Texas.

I ask you today to join me in voting for my friend, David Cook, for speaker. Let's choose a leader who will put us, and more importantly, Texas, first.

The nomination of the Honorable Dustin Burrows was seconded by the Honorable Mihaela Plesa of Collin County, speaking as follows:

I rise to second the nomination of Chairman Dustin Burrows as the next speaker of the Texas House.

As the granddaughter of immigrants, I was called to public service because of the stories my grandparents told me while I was growing up about what life was like living under the darkness of totalitarian rule and the struggles against communism. When I was sworn in today, it was on my grandmother's Bible. She passed away last year at the age of 95, but her incredible wisdom and history lessons are what guide me today. Our family came to this country not just for the promise of peace, but for the promise of opportunity—most importantly, the opportunity to be heard.

Members, there are forces inside and outside of this building my grandmother would recognize immediately. Ones dedicated to shutting down discourse, dedicated to ending opportunities for people like me and districts like mine from having a seat at the table. My family's stories taught me that the importance of our democratic institutions is about the freedom to speak. The freedom to disagree, but ultimately to work together free from fear of intimidation or reprisal. From McKinney to McAllen, Texas moves forward when we work together, even when we disagree. And I can guarantee you, I will disagree with Chairman Dustin Burrows. However, we need a speaker who will cultivate an environment allowing us to work through our disagreements with mutual respect. That is why I am supporting Dustin Burrows. Not because we agree on everything, but because he understands that this house—this is the people's house. It is for all Texans, even democrats from Collin County.

When Dustin Burrows embarked on his speaker campaign, he did not start by alienating 62 duly-elected members of this body. He did it with mutual respect and reaching out to members throughout this body. So take a minute and look around this chamber and think about the members that you know that are supporting Chairman Burrows—freshman members you might have just met to senior members who you look up to for mentorship, rural and urban voices, conservatives, moderates, and, yes, even progressives. It looks like Texas, all of Texas.

To my democratic colleagues, I know some of y'all are waiting for a second ballot, but friends, today is not the day to play risky games. That is exactly what the people who want to silence our voice want this chamber to do today. So

members, look around this historic chamber again, and notice the paintings and the composites on the wall. The generations who came before us. This should be a reminder that this house is bigger than any one party and any one person. That is what this vote is about—what institution we leave when our time here comes to an end.

So, members, it is time to clock in and get to work for the people of Texas. That starts with our first vote for our next speaker, Chairman Dustin Burrows. Let's show Texas that its leaders will not bend the knee to intimidation but instead rise up united to protect the independence of this Texas House of Representatives.

The nomination of the Honorable Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos was also seconded by the Honorable Jolanda Jones of Harris County, speaking as follows:

I rise today to second the nomination of representative Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives for the 89th Legislative Session.

Democrats, we are at a crossroads. Our decision today will not just shape this legislative session but the future of our party and our state. Texans, especially the voiceless and overlooked, are watching us. They need to see that we have the courage to fight for them, even when it is tough. The 88th Legislative Session taught us that when we stand together, we can win. We were the minority party then, and we defeated school vouchers with republican allies. But the voucher fight is not over. They are on the table again, and with the wrong speaker—trust me—they will be shoved down our throats. It will be the first step in dismantling public education and robbing our kids of a free education. Representative Ana-María Ramos will stand with us in this fight.

This fight is not just about vouchers; it is about everything we stand for as democrats and poor people in Texas. It's about stopping hate—the hate of diversity, equity, and inclusion; of immigrants; and of the LGBTQ+ community. It is about defending rights—the rights of parents to choose the best medical care for their children and women to choose what is best for our bodies without state interference. The right to be paid a living wage for an honest day's work. It is about fully funding historically Black colleges and universities. For y'all that don't know, they're called HBCUs, because I found out a whole bunch of people in this chamber do not know what an HBCU is. It is about fully funding public education, especially neighborhood schools. It is about criminal justice reform, affordable health care—which includes expanding Medicaid. It is about affordable housing and affordable groceries, creating more jobs, and fixing a grid. Making Texas a place where hardworking people, not just the rich, have the opportunity to succeed. The only speaker candidate that has pledged to fight these priorities is Representative Ana-María Ramos.

Those that are in leadership and those that are running have vowed to keep us out as chairs. Some really bad bills passed last session. They hurt my constituents. Our constituents want us to stand up and fight for them unapologetically, even if there is a chance we could lose. Representative Ramos will do just that.

As I reflect on this moment, I am reminded of Harriet Tubman, who says she could have freed so many more people if they only knew they were enslaved. Right now, some of us are enslaved. Not by chains, but by fear. Fear of losing, fear of retaliation, fear of standing up to our oppressors. Even if you think that Ana-María Ramos can't ultimately win this first round, I think we should show Texans that we can stand together. I am personally voting for Ana-María Ramos because she is the only democrat in this race. Y por mi familia Latina, mi abuela siempre decía que no se puede saber quien es la gente en los buenos tiempos. Se descubre en los tiempos difíciles. Supongos que los Tejanos verán quien es el "caucus" demócrata de la cámara de representantes en este momento difícil. My grandmother always said you can't tell who people are in good times, you find out in hard times. I guess Texas will see who the house democratic caucus is in this tough time, and I respectfully ask for you to vote for Ana-María Ramos for speaker of the Texas House.

The nomination of the Honorable David Cook was also seconded by the Honorable James Frank of Wichita County, speaking as follows:

It is my honor today to second the nomination of David Cook for the position of speaker for the Texas House.

I've had the pleasure of serving this body—sometimes the challenge of serving in this body—for the last 12 years. When the people of Wichita Falls, where I live, ask me how they should pray for me during session, I usually tell them three things: I say pray for a big brain, a big heart, and a small ego. Pray for wisdom beyond myself, because I need it for the many complex issues that face the 30 million people in this state. A big heart for compassion—compassion that truly helps others without making them dependent. For a small ego—you understand that. Humility—something I struggle with—to see every other person around me as a person of value regardless of, and especially if I don't agree with them.

So why do I tell you that during a seconding speech for David Cook? Because for the past two sessions I have had a seat directly behind David Cook on the house floor, and I have seen all three of these qualities in him. For those of y'all who have served, you know that you get an inside look at a person's character during those long days and nights on the floor, and David Cook truly does have wisdom and a big brain. He's a lawyer, a long-term former mayor, and he has become a leader in his short time in the house. He has a big heart. He has compassion. He works on juvenile justice reform with the bills that he works on. He has helped me with the CPS bills that I have worked on. He wants good things for people. And he has a small ego. He has humility, which—given the importance of the role and the gravity of the role we are about to vote on—may be the most important characteristic of the three. David is a good man, but he is not just a good man. He is committed to making sure every single member of the house is heard and that you are able to represent your district.

If you're a republican today, the choice is clear. Our caucus met and elected a speaker nominee. Today, we simply follow through on the promise we made our constituents. If you're a democrat here today, why should you vote for David Cook? I would suggest it's a seat at the table. In talking to my democratic

colleagues, including one of the speaker nominees, Ana-Maria Ramos—one of my favorite democrats—only a small number of you are actually invited to the table to negotiate most of the important bills of session. Even fewer of you have input on the appropriations process, even though it directly impacts your district, even though each of us represents the same 200,000 people. David is committed to the kind of consistent meetings during session that will help ensure that every single member in both parties gets their opinions heard, for those who want their opinions heard. Members' input is why most of us ran. To influence policies on behalf of our district, not to be told by a select group in leadership how to vote and what our districts would get. Because at the end of the day, this vote is not really about the individuals running for speaker but about your individual ability to represent your district.

I believe that David Cook gives more members an opportunity to actually represent their district than any other candidate. Please join me in voting for David Cook as speaker of the Texas House.

The nomination of the Honorable Dustin Burrows was also seconded by the Honorable Toni Rose of Dallas County, speaking as follows:

I rise today to second the nomination of Dustin Burrows for the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

I met Dustin prior to him even being sworn in, at an event. I actually thought he was a staffer. He looks so young. He's like a kid fresh out of college, but I learned quickly that he was a member-elect. He just looks so young. And so over the years, I watched him age rapidly, and I really think the beard has something to do with it. But seriously, I watched him grow from that eager freshman into a thoughtful leader who understands the weight and responsibilities of this institution. As vice-chair of Calendars, I worked alongside him and saw how much he cares about this house and his values. And let me just say this about Dustin: When he says yes, he means yes, and when he says no, he means no. And if he can't do it, he will tell you he can't do it. In these divided times, that kind of honesty is rare. That kind of integrity is priceless.

Members, we've heard the saying—and I know last session all I kept hearing was, "Don't California my Texas. Don't California my Texas." Well, don't Washington, D.C., my Texas, because that is what is at stake here. The choice before us isn't about who holds the gavel; it's about who we are as a body—a Texas body. It's about whether we maintain the Texas House traditions of working across party lines to serve all constituents or whether we surrender to the politics of no. Each of us represents approximately 200,000 Texans who sent us here to work for them—to think of them before we think of ourselves. Our districts look different. Our voters may look different, but every single one of those Texans deserves a voice in this chamber. I believe Dustin Burrows' commitment to protecting this institution, protecting your right to fight for your district regardless of your party. I believe in his commitment to maintaining a house where every member has a seat at the table and every voice can be heard. I second his nomination knowing we will disagree on policy issues, just like my colleague Representative Plesa said. That's a fact. I disagree with some of the policies that some of the democrats make. I mean, that's just a fact.

You're just going to disagree on policy. But what I do know is that he is a leader who would at least have a conversation. It's not already a no before you even have a conversation. So that's a conversation that my constituents deserve as Texans.

I'm asking you to take a step back and look at the big picture. Truth doesn't have a party label, and the ability to say what you mean and mean what you say, that doesn't have a party label either. It's called representing, and that is what I was sent here to do. Dustin Burrows is committed to fairness and protecting the traditions of this house. I know because I witnessed it. He stood on the front lines to ensure the passage of my bill to extend postpartum care for 12 months. When I was having issues, he was the first one to say, "What can I do to help? What do we need to do?" This is the kind of leader we need—one who will make sure everyone is able to represent their district. He will be the kind of speaker who can help us find common ground to solve the common problems facing our districts and our state. And that's why I am proud to second the nomination of Dustin Burrows as the next speaker of the Texas House.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos of Dallas County who addressed the house, in lieu of any additional seconding speeches, speaking as follows:

Buenas tardes. We mixed this up, didn't we? Buenas tardes, yo soy Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos. Gracias a todas nuestras familias por estar aquí con nosotros hoy, y por mi abuelita que nos está escuchando desde el cielo. Good afternoon, members, I am Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos, and thank you to the millions of Texans who labor every day to make ends meet and contribute to our economy and who are watching us here today. From the public school teacher to the baker in the local panadería to the farmhand who takes a shower after work every day, this is for you. Thank you to my family and supporters who are here today in the gallery and in our offices. To my husband, John, and my children, Ana, Diego, and Nathaniel, I love you all so much. And thank you, Mom, and to my siblings for your support. And to all who fight for a fair and stronger Texas, thank you.

I stand before you not just as a legislator but as a living testament to the enduring promise of the American dream. We are all Texans. Whether we grew up in the bustling streets of Dallas or the big country of West Texas, we provide for our families, and we know the value of hard work. Texans are proud, and Texans are friendly. Everything is bigger in Texas, especially the hearts and souls of our communities. Texans shelter a neighbor during a storm or give a stranger a jump in the grocery store parking lot. Texans stand up for each other against bullies who pick our pockets and harm our dignity. And yet, across this great state, families of all stripes are one medical crisis away from financial ruin. Our public schools are closing, rural communities are without hospitals, and young Texans do not know if they can save for their starter home. The thing is, these are policy choices, and it does not have to be this way. We deserve good pay for hard work, yet in the midst of an abundant surplus, we are surrounded by scarcity. A handful of Texas billionaires hold more wealth than the vast majority of Texans combined. Now, I do not say this to vilify people who work hard, overcome

obstacles, and earn great wealth—that is the dream. But policies that allow only a few to rise to the top prevent the rest of us from having a fair shot at prosperity. And as a result, we fight among ourselves—divided, instead of united. Texans do not expect us to solve everything in this chamber. They do not expect a handout, but they do expect us to put our differences aside in favor of common solutions to give Texans a fair shot. Together, we can pass policies that allow all Texans to prosper. Together, we create our Texas.

In our Texas, the sons of the mountains of El Paso and the daughters of the urban tapestry in Houston share an opportunity because they have access to a great education, a college they can afford, or a trade they can master. In our Texas, all people can have access to the health care that they need to live healthy and joyful lives—from the white-collar accountant to the blue-collar oil field worker, from the caregiver of a special needs child to the artist bringing light and joy to the world around them. In our Texas, working families from the sun-baked heat of the Gulf to the windy plains of the Panhandle have good jobs and robust benefits and never have to choose between paying bills, putting food on the table, or having access to clean drinking water. In our Texas, we live full lives in the north and storied lives in the south. And in the plains in the west and the Piney Woods in the east, we can grow old and retire in comfort, knowing that the next generation has what they need to thrive and keep our legacies alive. By making these ideals our priority, we resurrect the American dream and give Texans the tools and resources they need to build the life they want. Our Texas is within our grasp, if only we have the courage to reach for it.

To all my colleagues, I extend an open hand and ask for your vote. Our state faces challenges that transcend both generations and party lines. Let's put the people of Texas first because we have so much more in common than what separates us.

The nomination of the Honorable David Cook was also seconded by the Honorable Richard Peña Raymond of Webb County, speaking as follows:

I second the nomination of David Cook as speaker of the house. I first walked into this chamber, members, 32 years ago and still believe my most important vote is that for speaker. Three friends of mine filed for speaker: David, Ana-María, Dustin. But the numbers being what they are—88 republicans and 62 democrats—initially, I supported Dustin. But as I learned more about the race and the candidates, I decided to vote for David Cook.

Among other things, I looked at their time here in this chamber. I was willing to look past the things about each with which I did not agree. For example, Mr. Burrows and former speaker Dennis Bonnen sitting in the speaker's office trying to negotiate to allow access to someone that would help them defeat republicans and democrats they did not like and speaking candidly, with disdain, about many of you. Something they both denied until they realized it had been recorded. In the end, it led to Dennis Bonnen having to retire from this chamber. But I moved past that. I moved past that.

However, as this race began in earnest, I learned from firsthand witnesses—many of you—that it was Mr. Bonnen who was running Dustin's campaign and is still running things. I'm sure he's watching now. Dennis, whose

lobbying firm is appropriately and brazenly named Second Floor Strategies. I had hoped we could have a new beginning with Mr. Burrows, but that is clearly not the case, and you all know it. The more I learned about and thought about how only a few would be able to fully participate in and be a substantive part of the process were we to continue with that regime, the more I knew we must go in a new direction.

I believe David Cook will take us in that new direction of allowing more of the members to be part of the process. Democrats and republicans—not just those approved by the Second Floor strategists, where only a few are allowed into the room of influence and decision. I know that you want to be on the winning side. I've talked to so many of you, and I know sometimes you fear that there will be repercussions if you are not, but we must move past those fears. We must be stronger than those fears.

You know I prayed a lot about my decision. For me, prayers are very important. When you lose a child, as I lost my son Aren five years ago, prayers are even more important in your life. I could not have continued to live were it not for prayers and my faith. So members, we must put fear aside and embrace our faith instead. We must put fear aside and put the people whom we represent ahead of those we fear. When I see the people up in this gallery, I may not agree with everything they believe, but I know that these people have something in common with the constituents in every one of our districts. They fill us with their hopes and dreams, and mostly, they just ask that we not be afraid to represent them, even when it is not easy. We must move away from a house controlled by a select few. Mr. Cook is a consensus builder. You know that if you've worked with him. He believes we should all be a part of this process. I've spoken with so many of you about this race, and I know a majority of you want a new direction, a new start, and a new beginning. And I say let that begin by doing what your heart and your instincts tell you is the right thing. And there are some democrats that want to sanction me or censure me. Well, let me tell you guys that are watching: One of the things with which we do not agree with my friend Dustin Burrows is the speech he gave saying that even if every Confederate monument was taken down across the country, that they should stand in Texas, because Texas is different. I don't agree with that. But boy, if democrats come after me? Well then, democrats, if you vote for Mr. Burrows, get ready, because now they'll come after you. But it's not about party and politics; it's about the future.

The nomination of the Honorable Dustin Burrows was also seconded by the Honorable Lacey Hull of Harris County, speaking as follows:

Members, I'm proud to second the nomination of Dustin Burrows as speaker of the house—a true grassroots leader.

Serving my constituents as a member of the Texas House is the honor of a lifetime. I, myself, became politically active after becoming a mom because I realized the issues I considered critical for my son Owen's future were critical for Texas and our country as well. So I got involved. I started locally and eventually became a precinct chair to help get out the vote. I volunteered to help several candidates get elected, including three of our colleagues: Briscoe Cain, Tom Oliverson, and my dear friend Valoree Swanson, who also helped me get elected.

I even worked on a primary against an incumbent. I poured myself into candidates and causes that I believed in. I started taking Owen with me—volunteering when he was two years old. You don't get more grassroots or more Texas than a woman at a polling place with hard opinions and a toddler on her hip.

Unfortunately, some people have gotten the impression that being grassroots is about strutting on social media and attacking people for \$50 a tweet. That's not grassroots. Grassroots is about doing the work, being the ground game. Those people work themselves to exhaustion to drive positive change. That's why I'm offended at the political machine made up of big money and bigger lies that has attempted to pull the wool over the eyes of so many hardworking Texans. Those Texans deserve the truth about this contest, so I'm here. I have always advocated relentlessly for the causes and candidates that I believe in. You can bet I'll keep doing that until my last breath. I'm especially honored to advocate for my 200,000 constituents. They put their faith in me, and I take that very seriously. Like each of you, I'm here with their best interests at heart.

I'm not the only representative in this chamber who started at the grassroots level. So did my colleague and friend Dustin Burrows. In spite of all the fabrications and flat-out lies that you have heard about him lately, Dustin is a product of the grass roots and a man of unshakable integrity. Dustin is too humble to show you the pairs of shoes that he wore out block-walking, but he is a leader who has always done the work. The precinct chairs were so impressed by his hard work that they selected him to fill the vacant seat in his district. And he still has the support of his local party, precinct chairs, and grass roots. He's a battle-scarred, fellow fighter, grassroots guy. In the house, he's held numerous roles and even knows what it's like to vote his conscience against a speaker, regardless of consequences. He is a thoughtful leader who knows how to get things done for his district and do what's best for Texas. I'm talking about the Texas I want to shape for my son, Owen, who is here today representing his generation that is relying on us to secure our state's future. In this session, we can do that if we're selfless. We can do that if we're united, and we can do that if we're willing to stand up to the big-money, astroturf machine seeking to control this chamber. I mean, what's more Texan than standing on principle?

So let the big-money machine keep spreading those lies and threats. I will not waver. I will not be intimidated, and neither should you. As a mother and as a Texan, I will keep standing on principle and do what's right for my constituents, and that starts with choosing Dustin Burrows as our speaker. His commitment to this house is unwavering, his integrity is unshakable, and his willingness to just do the work like he always has is unmatched. Members, I welcome you to join me and cast your vote for the grassroots veteran who embodies the best of our state, Representative Dustin Burrows.

Pursuant to the provisions of the previous resolution, Secretary Nelson drew lots to determine the voting machine light color for each nominee, and the members of the house proceeded to the casting of the votes (Record 2) for the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas.

For the Honorable Dustin Burrows (green light) — 71

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| Anchía | Dean | Jones, V. | Perez, M. |
| Barry | Dutton | King | Perez, V. |
| Bell, C. | Fairly | Kitzman | Phelan |
| Bell, K. | Gámez | Lambert | Plesa |
| Bernal | Garcia, L. | Landgraf | Rose |
| Bhojani | Garcia Hernandez | Leach | Rosenthal |
| Bonnen | Gates | Longoria | Simmons |
| Bowers | Gerdes | Lopez, J. | Talarico |
| Buckley | Geren | Manuel | Tepper |
| Bucy | González, M. | Martinez | Turner |
| Burrows | Guerra | McQueeney | VanDeaver |
| Button | Harris | Metcalfe | Villalobos |
| Campos | Hefner | Meyer | Vo |
| Canales | Hernandez | Moody | Walle |
| Capriglione | Howard | Morales, E. | Wilson |
| Cole | Hull | Ordaz | Wu |
| Cortez | Hunter | Orr | Zwiener |
| Darby | Johnson | Patterson | |

For the Honorable Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos (red light) — 23

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Allen | Garcia, J. | Lalani | Reynolds |
| Bryant | Gervin-Hawkins | Lopez, R. | Rodríguez Ramos |
| Collier | González, J. | Martinez Fischer | Romero |
| Davis, A. | Goodwin | Meza | Thompson |
| Davis, Y. | Hinojosa | Morales, C. | Ward Johnson |
| Flores | Jones, J. | Morales Shaw | |

For the Honorable David Cook (white light) — 56

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| Alders | Harris Davila | Lujan | Schofield |
| Ashby | Harrison | Luther | Schoolcraft |
| Bumgarner | Hayes | McLaughlin | Shaheen |
| Cain | Hickland | Money | Shofner |
| Cook | Holt | Morgan | Slawson |
| Craddick | Hopper | Muñoz | Smithee |
| Cunningham | Isaac | Noble | Spiller |
| Curry | Kerwin | Olcott | Swanson |
| DeAyala | LaHood | Oliverson | Tinderholt |
| Dorazio | Leo Wilson | Paul | Toth |
| Dyson | Little | Pierson | Troxclair |
| Frank | Louderback | Raymond | Vasut |
| Guillen | Lowe | Richardson | Virdell |
| Harless | Lozano | Schatzline | Wharton |

Secretary Nelson stated that no nominee having received 76 or more of the votes cast, additional rounds of runoff voting with the two nominees receiving the largest number of votes will occur. Pursuant to the provisions of the previous resolution, Secretary Nelson drew lots to determine the voting machine light color for each nominee in the runoff, and the members of the house proceeded to

the casting of the votes (Record 3) for the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas.

For the Honorable Dustin Burrows (green light) — 85

| | | | |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Anchía | Flores | King | Perez, V. |
| Barry | Gámez | Kitzman | Phelan |
| Bell, C. | García, J. | Lalani | Plesa |
| Bell, K. | García, L. | Lambert | Reynolds |
| Bernal | García Hernandez | Landgraf | Romero |
| Bhojani | Gates | Leach | Rose |
| Bonnen | Gerdes | Longoria | Rosenthal |
| Bowers | Geren | Lopez, J. | Simmons |
| Buckley | Gervin-Hawkins | Lopez, R. | Talarico |
| Bucy | González, J. | Manuel | Tepper |
| Burrows | González, M. | Martinez | Thompson |
| Button | Guerra | Martinez Fischer | Turner |
| Campos | Harless | McQueeney | VanDeaver |
| Canales | Harris | Metcalf | Villalobos |
| Capriglione | Hefner | Meyer | Vo |
| Cole | Hernandez | Moody | Walle |
| Cortez | Howard | Morales, E. | Wilson |
| Craddick | Hull | Morales Shaw | Wu |
| Darby | Hunter | Ordaz | Zwiener |
| Dean | Johnson | Orr | |
| Dutton | Jones, J. | Patterson | |
| Fairly | Jones, V. | Perez, M. | |

For the Honorable David Cook (red light) — 55

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Alders | Hayes | McLaughlin | Schoolcraft |
| Ashby | Hickland | Money | Shaheen |
| Bumgarner | Holt | Morgan | Shofner |
| Cain | Hopper | Muñoz | Slawson |
| Cook | Isaac | Noble | Smithee |
| Cunningham | Kerwin | Olcott | Spiller |
| Curry | LaHood | Oliverson | Swanson |
| DeAyala | Leo Wilson | Paul | Tinderholt |
| Dorazio | Little | Pierson | Toth |
| Dyson | Louderback | Raymond | Troxclair |
| Frank | Lowe | Richardson | Vasut |
| Guillen | Lozano | Rodríguez Ramos | Virdell |
| Harris Davila | Lujan | Schatzline | Wharton |
| Harrison | Luther | Schofield | |

Present, Not Voting — 9

| | | |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| Allen | Davis, A. | Meza |
| Bryant | Goodwin | Morales, C. |
| Collier | Hinojosa | Ward Johnson |

Absent — 1

Davis, Y.

STATEMENT OF VOTE

I was shown voting present, not voting on Record No. 3. I intended to vote for the Honorable Dustin Burrows.

Ward Johnson

Secretary Nelson declared the Honorable Dustin Burrows of Lubbock County to be the duly elected speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas.

**OATH OF OFFICE TAKEN BY
THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

Speaker-elect Burrows was recognized at the speaker's rostrum.

The Honorable Dustin Burrows of Lubbock County took the constitutional oath of office as speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas, which was administered by the Honorable Jane Nelson, secretary of state of the State of Texas, as follows:

"I, _____, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state. So help me God."

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Greg Bonnen of Galveston County who introduced family members of Speaker Burrows: his wife, Elisabeth; and his sons, Davis, Whitby, and Henry.

ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER

Secretary Nelson introduced the Honorable Dustin Burrows, speaker of the House of Representatives, who addressed the house, speaking as follows:

You'll bear with me; I had hoped I'd have a chance to actually preview what I'm about to say before I did, but we have obviously been working to the last minute for this.

Let me say this. Members, honored friends, fellow Texans, at the midpoint of an exciting day on the heels of an eventful couple of months, I am honored beyond words to stand before you as speaker. I'm a firm believer in servant leadership. So just imagine my spot at the bottom of the house organizational chart, supporting each and every one of you in your obligations to your district and to our great state. You represent millions of Texas families who entrusted you with their votes and their future.

So as I begin, I want to thank my own family—my wife, Elisabeth; our three sons, Davis, Whitby, and Henry—for their support during a challenging season. I love you, and I appreciate you. I also want to recognize and commend all of the families of the members present here today. We stand on the brink of a 140 day session in which sacrifices we make in serving Texas come to rest on your shoulders as well. I ask my fellow members to join me in showing our appreciation to each other with a round of applause. As we know all too well,

public service demands sacrifice, not just from those who serve, but from those who love them. Your patience, understanding, and support make this work possible. Also, to my dedicated staff, who have worked tirelessly through long days and nights leading to this moment, thank you for your commitment to the greatest state of all, Texas. To our dedicated house staff, the parliamentarians, clerks, sergeants, and all who keep this chamber running, thank you for your professionalism and dedication. To the members of this house, I thank you for placing your trust in me.

In my time with you today, I want to be painfully direct and mercifully brief. Focusing on one overriding concept: This is the people's house. Each of us was dispatched from our home districts with needs, dreams, and hopes of our constituents and our keep. Each of us has a role to play in the people's house. During my time in this chamber, I've occupied every station. From what felt like the highest to what had to be the lowest—sometimes in the same session. I've carried major legislation and minor bills and experienced sessions with no bills at all. Each role, each experience, has taught me something essential about this institution we call the people's house. I stand here today because of mentors who showed me the way. I remember the great Garnet Coleman, who chaired my first committee and shared wisdom I have never forgotten. He told me, "We all have the same people—poor people, wealthy people, and everything in between united by the fact they all have problems. But at the end of the day, we have to work together because of whom we represent. We work for the people." Sam Houston once said, "A leader is someone who helps improve the lives of other people or improves the system they live under." Those words capture the essence of our responsibility here. The weight of this moment and the trust you've placed in me is not lost on me. Each of you brings unique wisdom from the districts you serve. From the Panhandle to the Valley, from East Texas to El Paso, our strength lies not in conformity but in how we harmonize these diverse perspectives into service for this great state.

Recent days have tested our bonds. Yet they've also proven that this institution is greater than any one individual or any faction. The house endures because Texas, and Texans, need it to endure. From rules that govern this chamber, they are designed to protect members from the speaker, not the other way around. The rules exist to guarantee open and respectful policy debates, as is fitting for such a representative body. They ensure the majority can rule while the minority has a voice. All of us have a role to play in addressing some clear and pressing challenges. Property tax payers need relief. Our public schools need support. Our water infrastructure needs investment. We need to address the threats of terrorism on the heels of a Texan conducting an attack on New Year's Day. These are not republican or democratic issues, they're Texan issues. Whether your district is urban or rural, coastal or border, your constituents sent you here to ensure their children can prosper, their communities can grow, and their hopes for their future do not diminish. I commit to you today, every member—every member—will have a voice, and every district—every district—will have a seat at the table. Committee assignments will be made in

keeping with your house rules, reflecting the diversity of experience and expertise of this chamber. Our timeline for priority legislation will be transparent, and every Texan will know their house is working for them.

The institutions of this house are essential and timeless. They evolved through our history to provide a suitable and reliable place to deliberate the aspirations and desires of each and every one of our constituents. This work can be complex, difficult, and even divisive. But history shows us that we can attain outcomes that are just, sensible, and affordable. That is what this chamber does. The house is at its best when we're tackling problems that are seemingly insurmountable. We do that by building broad coalitions united by shared values that are bigger and stronger than our geographical or our political differences. Like Sam Houston and those who came before us, we face our own defining moment. Not on a battlefield, but in this chamber where the future of Texas takes shape daily through our collective work. The next 140 days hold unlimited potential. If we remember our purpose, I will certainly remember my responsibility to you and this chamber.

I have served in this body long enough to know that being speaker was traditionally considered a sacrifice. You had to put the institution first. I accept that sacrifice willingly. Because I believe in this house, and more importantly, I believe in each and every one of you. Today we begin the people's work. Whether you voted for me or not, my office door will be open to you. In the end, we're all here for the same reason. Not to please ourselves or any one individual, but to serve our districts with distinction and to serve Texas with integrity, courage, and common sense.

Let us make the 89th Session of the Texas Legislature one to remember for its decorum, for its effectiveness, and for the future we shape together. May God bless you, and through this house—the people's house—may God continue to bless the great State of Texas.

**MOTION IN WRITING
AUTHORIZING CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT
OF COMMITTEE STAFF**

The Honorable Will Metcalf of Montgomery County offered the following motion in writing:

Mr. Speaker:

I move that staff members employed by house committees at the end of the 88th Legislature continue to be employed by the house subject to available funding until standing committee assignments have been made for the 89th Legislature.

Metcalf

The motion in writing was read and prevailed.

INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF

The interpretation of the proceedings of the house was provided today by Zofia Levendowski, Alivia Parker, and Jamie Kail.

CAPITOL PHYSICIAN

The speaker announced Dr. Terrance Hines of Austin as the "Doctor for the Day."

ADJOURNMENT

The Honorable Jeff Leach of Collin County moved that the house adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow in memory of the Honorable Bill L. "Billy" Arnold, the Honorable George William "Bill" Ceverha, the Honorable Frank Collazo Jr., the Honorable Walter David Counts, the Honorable Robert Eugene "Bob" Davis, the Honorable Mary Diane Denny, the Honorable Julius Ottis "J.O" Duncan, the Honorable Joseph Vincent "Jay" Gibson, the Honorable Curtis Matthew Graves, the Honorable Robert D. "Bob" Hunter, the Honorable Jimmy Lee "Jim" Jackson, the Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, the Honorable Jerald Henry Larry, the Honorable George Pettit Macatee, the Honorable Thomas Jefferson "Tom" Martin, the Honorable James Parker McCollough, the Honorable Gus Franklin Mutscher, the Honorable René Orlando Oliveira, the Honorable Carl A. Parker, the Honorable James R. "Jim" Pitts, the Honorable Billy Charles "Bill" Presnal, the Honorable Herman Paul Pressler, the Honorable William Rayford Price, the Honorable Abraham "Abe" David Ribak, and the Honorable Barry Bradford Telford.

The motion prevailed.

The house accordingly, at 3:18 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

ADDENDUM

NAME DISPLAY REQUEST

Ana-Maria Ramos, District 102, requested to have her name displayed as Ana-María Rodríguez Ramos for the rosters for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature.

Cassandra Hernandez, District 115, requested to have her name displayed as Cassandra Garcia Hernandez for the rosters for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature.

